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## Millennial Communication in the Workplace: A Cautionary Tale about Social Media

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## **Millennial Communication in the Workplace: A Cautionary Tale about Social Media**

**“A new generation arrives on the scene about once every twenty years, and every time it does, older generations struggle to understand how “these kids today” think and behave” –**

**Morley Winograd**



Image by [Alexis Verone](#)

**Samantha Rangel**

**Senior Capstone**

**Practical and Professional Ethics Concentration**

**Research Essay**

**Professor Debian Marty**

**Division of Humanities and Communication**

**Spring 2017**

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## Senior Project Proposal

### 1. **Provide your name and identify your area of concentration**

- Samantha Rangel
- Practical & Professional Ethics

### 2. **Focus:** Identify the *specific* issue, problem, or question addressed in your essay. Be sure to frame as a question. Briefly explain why you chose this focus area.

- Has social media negatively affected millennials' interpersonal communication in the workplace?
- I chose this focus area because I am a millennial and my bias that I have towards this topic makes me want to do more research on the opposing sides view.

Currently, I do not believe that millennials have been affected by social media to the extent that employers believe it has, so I am hoping to challenge that bias with the research I do. I also chose this focus area because I have always been interested in the way that social media has become such a big part of millennials' lives whether as a good or bad thing and I am interested in how it influences millennials.

### 3. **Alignment with Common Theme:** Provide a *concise overview* of your project's *direct alignment* with this semester's shared theme of inquiry.

- Within my capstone I am exercising leadership by doing a large amount of research and by forcing myself to stick to a strict schedule that I will make in order to finish and meet all the deadlines for my capstone research paper. I also

plan on exercising leadership by giving either a hypothetical or real solution to how millennials and employers could start to break the stereotypes and come to a mutual understanding regarding social media.

4. **Purpose:** What is your project's primary purpose? What do you hope to accomplish through this project?

- My research papers primary purpose is to inform students, adults, and anyone else who reads it about whether social media has the negative affect on millennials' interpersonal communication in the workplace. Millennials tend to be stereotyped all the time and with this paper I am hoping to bring some mutual understanding between millennials and employers related to social media and the workplace. I also hope to bring awareness to my fellow millennial classmates who are about to go into the workplace after graduation; to bring awareness of the negatives but also show them the positives that social media has brought to us as a generation.

5. **Capstone Title:** What is your project's working title?

- It Makes Sense...They're Millennials'!!

6. **Working Summary:** Provide a one-paragraph working summary of your project...

- My project is a 15-20 page research paper focusing on millennials, social media, and their interpersonal communication in the workplace. In my paper I will be focusing on the viewpoint of employers and how they believe that social media has had a negative affect on millennials' interpersonal communication in the

workplace. Some of the negative affects that employers have said about millennials in the workplace and their communication are: no communication at all because of distractions and texting on social media, “casual approach” to their language and how they speak to their bosses the same way they speak to their friends, miscommunication, confrontation, the way something is interpreted especially through non-verbal messages, and no soft skills. I also plan on focusing on the opposite viewpoint where social media has been a positive affect on millennials and their interpersonal communication. Throughout my paper I will bring in my theoretical framework and tie that in with my topic. I will be using Dacher Keltner’s theory the power paradox incorporating that with the stereotypes of millennials in the workplace and how they are seen as “self-centered” because of how social media has affected them, which is exactly what Keltner believes is the opposite way of obtaining power, Keltner believes you have to give to gain power, not to be all about me me me(Machiavellian ways).

7. **Sources:** Address each of the following: In order to complete your project, what additional knowledge, insights, skills, understanding, and/or other resources and tools do you anticipate needing? Describe the kinds of primary and/or secondary sources you intend to use for your inquiry. This could include collecting original oral histories, analyzing government statistics, consulting scholarly peer-reviewed articles, books, and websites, among others. If you have consulted sources to get started, list them here.

- In order to complete my paper I think it would be best to try and incorporate a book that has to do with social media and millennials or that has to do with

millennials and communication. Any of the two would be great but if I can't find that then articles would be more than enough.

- The primary sources I plan on using are peer-reviewed articles. I plan on using the library database and Google scholar to do my research and find peer-reviewed articles. As my secondary sources I would like to input how I feel about the stereotype of millennials but not completely give a bias viewpoint; just to add some definition to my paper I would like to add the viewpoint of a millennial, or even research some viewpoints of millennials.
- Sources: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2868990/>
- <http://www.cio.com/article/3082775/unified-communications/millennials-are-shaking-up-workplace-communication.html>
- <http://www.benefitspro.com/2016/04/13/poor-communication-skills-hinder-millennials-in-wo?slreturn=1487915300>

8. **Next Steps:** What steps will you need to take to meet your project's expectations, including preparation of all required deliverables? (be as specific as possible)

- A main step I will most definitely need to take in order to meet my project's expectations is to not slack off and procrastinate. I tend to get overwhelmed and stressed easily, so I plan on giving myself breaks and remind myself to breathe and take it one step at a time and realize that I will get through it, I will have a great paper that I will be proud of by the end of this semester. I plan on spending more time in the library where there aren't any distractions; I will become laser focused and have tunnel vision the more time I spend at the library. I also plan on

setting aside my phone and only using it for emergencies or when I have finished a goal I set for myself for that specific time period that I will be working on my paper at the library. I plan on managing my time wisely and meet every deadline.

9. **Timeline:** Provide a detailed (and realistic) timeline for completion of each step required to meet the project's expectations.

- February 24<sup>th</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup>: Keep doing research and start to organize it all in order to start the annotated bibliography that way I can physically see what my sources each talk about
- February 27<sup>th</sup>: Take a breather and relax a bit from capstone. Have someone look at what I have so far, so they can give me some feedback
- February 28<sup>th</sup> - March 4<sup>th</sup>: Start paper and try to get the introduction and some body paragraphs done; keep on doing research if needed
- March 5<sup>th</sup>: Overlook beginning of paper and revise any mistakes
- March 6<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup>: Work on my paper, write some more body paragraphs
- March 11<sup>th</sup>: Revise what was added to my paper, check to make sure I am not going in circles and repeating myself
- March 12<sup>th</sup>: Take a breather and relax for a bit
- March 13<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup>: Keep working on my paper and start thinking of what to put on poster board for capstone festival
- March 15<sup>th</sup>: Turn in project titles and abstract or summary
- March 16<sup>th</sup> - April 2<sup>nd</sup>: Work on paper and revise any mistakes
- April 3<sup>rd</sup>: Turn in essay draft



- April 4<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>: Work some more on paper/ Take a breather one of these days
- April 10<sup>th</sup>: Turn in resume for Professional Development Plan
- Rest of the semester: Finish paper and work on poster board again for Capstone Festival

## **Abstract**

This research paper focuses on the influence that social media has on millennials' interpersonal communication in the workplace. After further research, it became apparent that social media has had more negative than positive effects on millennials' interpersonal communication in the workplace. Using Dacher Keltner's power paradox theory/Principle #6 we start to understand why these negative effects that employers have been observing and inaccurately evaluating have affected millennials' ability to endure power and the capacity to influence in the workplace. Millennials will occupy majority of the workforce by 2020, so employers must start to find a successful way to communicate with millennials regarding these negative effects. In order to establish a mutual understanding between both employers and millennials some solutions need to be implemented into the workplace to help millennials improve their interpersonal communication but at the same time have employers understand that the workplace must also evolve with technology.

## **Introduction**

Morley Winograd is correct once again, "older generations struggle to understand how "these kids today" think and behave" (Winograd). This time, employers, who are the generation of baby boomers, have analyzed the millennial generation and questioned their behaviors. Millennials, sometimes known as Generation Y, are the biggest generation in the workforce. "As of 2015, Millennials became the largest generation in the American workforce (35%, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics)" (Meyer). Now over 75 million strong, they were born between 1980 and 2000. They're the first generation to grow up in the digital age and to earn the name, "digital natives." A digital native is "someone who was raised in a digital, media-saturated

world. The term is often used synonymously with Millennial” (Meyer). The divide between baby boomers and millennials is clear.

### **Baby Boomers’ Concerns**

Baby boomers have concerns about millennial communication in the workplace. They are concerned with the excessive “way Generation Y uses technology for work, play, and studies” (Venter). They are concerned that millennials’ communication will not improve and that their technological communication skills will get in the way of baby boomers excelling in the workplace. At the same time, baby boomers are concerned that millennials are losing their ability to communicate face-to-face because of social media. They worry that millennials will lose the human connection that someone encounters when communicating interpersonally. Baby boomers and millennials both have generalizations in the workplace today. “Millennials, we’ve heard, are coddled, entitled and expectant of a trophy for showing up at work every day. Conversely, Boomers are micro-managers who don’t respect the talents of young employees” (Casslerly).

As a millennial, I’d like to learn whether social media has affected millennials’ interpersonal communication in the workplace? Interpersonal communication is “a kind of communication in which people communicate their feelings, ideas, emotions, and information face to face to each other, it can be in verbal or non-verbal form” (Interpersonal). Some negative effects include inattentiveness because distracted by texting and social media on the job, an inappropriately “casual approach” when speaking to their boss and co-workers, an inability to understand nonverbal communication or empathize with other perspectives. These complaints result in millennial struggles to handle confrontation or to employ social skills. Some positive effects include having hard skills, using social media to connect with potential business partners

before meeting them, and using social media to spread the word of the company. Millennials have negative and positive effects in the workplace because of social media, but there can always be a mutual understanding established between employers and millennials.

### **Theory: Keltner's Power Paradox**

Looking through the lens of Dacher Keltner's power paradox theory/Principle #6: Groups construct reputations that determine the capacity to influence, we start to understand why these negative effects employers have observed but inaccurately evaluated has affected millennials' ability to endure power and their capacity to influence in the workplace. Keltner states that:

The power paradox is this: we rise in power and make a difference in the world due to what is best about human nature, but we fall from power due to what is worst. We gain a capacity to make a difference in the world by enhancing the lives of others, but the very experience of having power and privilege leads us to behave, in our worst moments like impulsive, out-of-control sociopaths (Keltner).

### **Theory: Rosenberg's Nonviolent Communication**

Looking at Marshall Rosenberg's Nonviolent Communication observation without evaluation he states that:

Observations are specific to time, place, and context. It's like the difference in saying "you're late" and "I thought you were gonna be home at 6 and it is 7. Evaluations include assumptions and judgments that may or may not be accurate, and thus sound like criticism (Denson).

Rosenburg's view on observation and evaluation makes us acknowledge that employers have observed these negative effects millennials have, but have inaccurately evaluated them. While inaccurately evaluating these negative effects employers have given millennials a reputation of being "self-centered." When identifying what being self-centered means, the main concept is always thinking about yourself and your own wants and needs. This reputation of being "self-centered" affects the power millennials could have in the workplace. It also affects how millennials are seen, their ability to communicate in the workplace, and endure power.

### **Theory: Keltner's Principle #6**

This ties into Principle #6: Groups construct reputations that determine the capacity to influence. The reputation employers give millennials of being "self-centered" affects their capacity to influence in the workplace. Millennials are seen as the bad apple of the group. During company meetings, their comments will not be taken into consideration and co-workers will not interact with them. Keltner states there are two ways reputations affect an individual's capacity to influence.

First reputations create opportunities for influence. Studies find that if you have a reputation for advancing the greater good, others will direct more resources to you...They will collaborate with you more cooperatively and effectively...Second, reputations are a group's ways of making individuals aware of the effects of their actions upon others (Keltner).

### **Millennial Communication in the Workplace: Negative Effects**

Social media affects millennials in many negative ways but one of those effects is inattentiveness, because they are distracted with their social media and texting while on the job. If the social media being used is work-related, they still get distracted and do not engage in communication, because they are constantly looking at their phone. Kenneth Olmstead states in a survey done by Pew Research that, “Fifty-six percent of workers who use social media platforms for work-related purposes agree that social media distracts from the work they need to do, with thirty percent agreeing strongly” (Olmstead). This is one of the top reasons why employers inaccurately evaluate millennials as “self-centered”, because they do not know how to build relationships and are always focused on what others are doing online. In his YouTube video, Simon Sinek explains that millennials are not able to build relationships because social media consumes them and that affects them in the workplace. For example, a millennial employee has a meeting with some coworkers, but the millennial has their phone on the table, what does that show? It shows that the millennials’ interest is somewhere else. They are interested whether someone texts them or if they get a notification with how many likes their latest Instagram post received.

Social media and texting has an affect on millennials’ communication with their coworkers. In my personal experience, I have met other millennials who disregard communicating with their coworkers because they would rather be on social media. I have encountered this first hand; there was a time I was having my thirty-minute lunch break while at work. Even though it was not a lot of time, I liked having conversations with people in the break room. The reason for this was because I would always be scheduled to work an eight-hour shift alone. I missed communicating with someone on a personal level during those eight hours. In the break room, a girl around my age sat on the table near me and I decided to start a conversation

with her. It was a hi and bye situation, because she got on her phone after I started the conversation. This girl made me feel disrespected and made me realize that employers have inaccurately evaluated millennials as “self-centered” because of millennials like this girl. It bothered me to learn that employers have generalized all millennials as “self-centered,” even though not all millennials’ communication in the workplace is the same.

Worldwide employer surveys indicate one in every five companies have chosen to not fill positions because the candidates do not have the much desired interpersonal communication skills, but most of them are very comfortable navigating social media websites (White).

Simon Sinek’s Millennials in the Workforce video states that, “Engaging in technology, more specifically social media and texting releases a chemical named dopamine, which makes people feel good which is why millennials keep up to date with social media and they text people to get a response” (Simon). He explained how dopamine is the same chemical that makes people feel good when they smoke, drink, and gamble. Dopamine is a highly addictive chemical that millennials are getting while engaging on social media. This may be a reason why millennials are not able to put their phones away while working because they are highly addicted to them. It is a possibility that millennials have nomophobia; which is the fear of being away from your phone.

Social media has also affected millennials’ interpersonal communication in the workplace, because they tend to have an inappropriately “casual approach” when speaking to their boss and co-workers. According to Ronald Alsop, “Millennials also tend to be very candid and chummy on social networks with people they barely know, including authority figures, and they often carry that approach over to emails and in-person conversations” (Alsop). Many

millennials speak to their boss the same way they would speak on social media when they have conversations with friends. According to Harwant Khush:

Frequent use of text messages, short twitter posts, and abbreviation in daily language rather than face-to-face time to communicate has definitely added to the weakening of language skills. The vital importance of verbal communication skills is crucial to advance in careers, maintain and build relationships, and project a positive image at the workplace (Khush).

Millennials use a lingo when speaking to friends on social media and face-to-face. This lingo eventually becomes habit and millennials start to incorporate it into everyday life, including the workplace. This lingo affects millennials because bosses and co-workers start to believe that they have no understanding of how to communicate professionally and respectfully. These beliefs that develop can affect millennials in the long run. They are seen as the bad apple in the workplace; to the extent that the boss and co-workers will not introduce millennials to future business partners. Which affects their ability to network and build connections.

This “casual approach” that millennials take while speaking to their boss and co-workers affects their communication. It drives their boss and co-workers away from having a conversation with them, which in return causes millennials to want to be on social media even more, because that is the only way that they will feel a sense of connection. According to Amanda Lenhart, “Nearly two-thirds of teen Internet users (63%) go online—36% of teens go online several times a day and 27% go online about once a day” (Amanda). I am guilty of taking a “casual approach” with my boss. It all depends on the situation that the millennial is in when taking the “casual approach.” If the boss is around the same age range as the millennial and they make it a point to take the “casual approach,” then the boss cannot be disappointed when it is



time to have a serious conversation. The millennial has built a trusting relationship with their boss and they feel comfortable enough to ask for anything. They talk to their boss as a friend because the boss initiated that “casual approach” communication style.

A flaw that millennials have from being on social media so much is miscommunication because millennials rarely encounter nonverbal communication. Nonverbal communication is:

Our facial expressions, gestures, eye contact, posture, and tone of voice—that speak the loudest. The ability to understand and use nonverbal communication, or body language, is a powerful tool that can help you connect with others, express what you really mean, and build better relationships (Nonverbal Communication).

Majority of millennials communicate through social media. When they encounter someone face-to-face they do not understand the nonverbal communication part of the conversation. When millennials communicate through social media they do not encounter nonverbal communication because they are not able to physically see how someone reacts to their Tweet or their Instagram post.

A conversation between a millennial and co-worker can easily be miscommunicated, because things could be taken out of context. This affects their interpersonal communication in the workplace because millennials start to shy away from having conversations if the encounters they experience end with miscommunication or confrontation. As a millennial myself, I have had experiences with miscommunication because I do not understand non-verbal communication to the extent that I would like. It is hard to teach people non-verbal communication because depending on the situation of the conversation someone’s facial expressions, gestures, eye contact, posture, and tone of voice could change. “Only seven percent of communication is

written or verbal, whereas ninety-three percent is nonverbal” (Tardanico). For example, a millennial is in a conversation with their boss and they are pitching them an idea they are passionate about. The boss gives a reaction but the millennial does not understand the nonverbal communication given to them. They go throughout the day thinking that their idea was not good because of the boss’s reaction. When in reality the boss gave a good reaction, not a bad one. The millennial would not know that the reaction was good because they did not understand the nonverbal communication that their boss gave them.

Social media has affected millennials because when they have conversations face-to-face with their boss and co-workers, the miscommunication turns into confrontation. Millennials do not know how to distinguish differences in tone and authority when their boss communicates with them, so the conversation turns into confrontation. Not knowing how to handle confrontation affects millennials in the long run, because those confrontations could lead to being fired if the situation is not resolved and the wrong thing is said during the interaction. In a recent study done by Linda Gravett, she interviewed ten millennials asking them about a time when they had an encounter with their boss. The millennial in the study stated that he believed the boss was yelling at him.

She asked whether the boss raised his voice. The millennial said, “No.” She asked whether the boss used profanity. The millennial said, “No.” “So I said, ‘Explain to me what yelling at you means,’ and the young man said, ‘Well, he was really firm and he disagreed with me.’ He took that as being yelled at (Gravett).

In my personal experience at work my boss would be communicating with me, but the way they spoke would sound like they were attacking me. Majority of the time I was right about them attacking me and being rude, but there are times where I completely misread the

conversation. It is harder for millennials to understand confrontation when they rarely experience non-verbal communication. Social media is not able to teach the nonverbal communication that millennials need to understand in the workplace to avoid miscommunication and confrontation altogether. For millennials everything is now communicated either through a phone, computer, Apple TV, iPad, etc.

The last negative effect that social media has on millennials' interpersonal communication in the workplace is having no soft skills. Soft skills consist of social skills and the ability to build relationships. According to Bill Sutton, "Soft skills, primarily in the communication areas, have deteriorated as we have become increasingly dependent on technology and social media" (Sutton). Employers believe that the high use of digital technology and social media makes millennials lose the ability to understand and have empathy (one of the many soft skills). In Keltner's power paradox theory one of the many practices, to gain and maintain power, is empathy. Keltner states that the moment you lose empathy and other practices that got you power in the first place, is when you start to lose power. Employers have observed these negative effects that millennials have in the workplace, because of social media, but have inaccurately evaluated and given them a bad reputation based off what they believe to be true about millennials in the workplace.

On the other hand soft skills affect millennials in the workplace. According to Dan Schawbel, "While soft skills like building relationships and handling workplace conflict are important, companies are much more results-driven now, as they attempt to close the skills gap and keep up with the pace of technological innovation" (Schawbel). In the 21<sup>st</sup> century soft skills are not the most important skill anymore, especially when the workplace is getting more digitally

advanced. Susan Steinbrecher states in her study that, “Conversely, 69% of the millennials surveyed felt that soft skills “get in the way of getting the job done” (Steinbrecher).

### **Millennial Communication in the Workplace: Positive Effects**

Even though social media has negatively affected millennials’ interpersonal communication in the workplace, there are positive effects that millennials have thanks to social media. Those positive effects include millennials having hard skills, using social media to connect with potential business partners before meeting them, and using social media to spread the word of the company. Whenever employers say that millennials prefer being on social media than talking face-to-face with someone that is incorrect. Adobe did a study and found that:

Millennials value interpersonal interaction over digital interaction at work. While 81% of millennials said “state of the art technology” was paramount to an ideal working environment over perks or amenities, 55% said they valued in-person communication at work over digital (White...Millennials).

This proves that employers have inaccurately evaluated millennials as being “self-centered” just because they happen to be born in digitally advanced times. Simon Sinek states that millennials were dealt a bad hand and it is not their fault that they grew up with so much digital technology around them.

These hard skills millennials have are technology-based skills. For example, knowing how to use several types of technology like: computers, phones, iPads, Apple watches, different projectors in business meetings, etc. According to Dan Schawbel, “Fifty-five percent of HR managers said they focus more on hard skills when hiring, versus only 21% who focus more on personality” (Schawbel). It is difficult for millennials to not use these hard skills while working.

They have grown up with digital technology for most of their lives, and it will evolve and advance throughout the years to come. These hard skills help millennials find a common interest with companies. Companies like Apple and Google need their workers to have hard skills, because their companies focus on digital technology. These companies are great for millennials, because social media would not be negatively affecting their interpersonal communication skills, it would be enhancing it. For example, when entering an Apple store the first thing workers do is approach you and start a conversation. From a first glance around the store, it is easy to point out majority of the workers are millennials. Apple stores are great for enhancing communication skills and it's a bonus the workers are millennials: the generation who is informed about technology.

Social media has helped millennial employees build a relationship with potential business partners, before meeting them. Ingenuity Marketing Group states that, "To grow your business, it's essential to draw in business owners of all ages and backgrounds, which means social media needs to become an integral piece of your business development efforts" (Ingenuity). Having millennials use social media to connect and spread the word of the company they work for benefits everyone. Social media is the most common way that millennials communicate their ideas about where they work. It is helpful for building relationships with their co-workers and boss. Millennials could look up any social media that their peers have and find something that they could relate on. Kenneth Olmstead states that, "Seventeen percent of workers say they use social media to build or strengthen personal relationships at work—but the transparency that social media facilitates comes with costs as well as benefits" (Olmstead). Social media is the easiest and fastest way to learn things about people and then deciding whether to build a relationship and communicate. Anything from a 140 character tweet on Twitter, a video or photo

on Instagram, a snap on Snapchat, or a post on Pinterest can help millennials spread the word of their company and communicate something to the world. From personal experience, I have friends who started their own companies, and the most successful way they spread the word about it was through social media. They noticed how fast they could get a response from potential business partners who could sponsor their company and help build it up. After further research, it is clear that social media has had more negative than positive effects on millennials interpersonal communication in the workplace.

### **Employers in the Workplace: Inaccurately Evaluating Millennials**

Employers need to stop inaccurately evaluating and giving millennials a bad reputation of being “self-centered.” This reputation is based off of them observing negative effects that millennials have because of social media. It affects millennials’ capacity to influence in the workplace. Digital technology is advancing and employers need to get on the bandwagon of understanding that not all millennials are “self-centered.” Every generation has its own weakness and while some believe social media is a weakness for millennials, others believe social media is positive because it is more prominent in today’s workplace. According to David Smith, “Millennials will make up more than 50% of the workforce by 2020, so it’s crucial for companies of all sizes to consider how to attract and retain this generation” (White...7). For this very reason a mutual understanding should be developed between employers and millennials.

Majority of employers who have inaccurately evaluated and given millennials this bad reputation of being “self-centered” are comparing two generations, baby boomers and millennials. Baby boomers are the generation born between 1946 and 1964. Employers do not evaluate baby boomers as “self-centered” because boomers have developed the soft skills that

millennials lack. They developed those soft skills because digital technology and social media was not as prominent as today. This bad reputation could vanish if employers stop comparing millennials to past generations who grew up. Employers have to understand that millennials are adapting and evolving with social media , so they must try to find different ways for their companies to also adapt with millennials. Lee Rainie states that, “Young people may be newcomers to the world of work, but it’s their bosses who are immigrants into the digital world” (Rainie). Not all employers inaccurately evaluate and give millennials a bad reputation, just like not all millennials are obsessed with being on social media while at work. Some employers think, “Millennials are continuous learners, team players, collaborators, diverse, optimistic, achievement-oriented, socially conscious and highly educated” (Brack). When employers observe millennials and notice the negative effects that social media has on them; employers should not be quick to inaccurately evaluate them. These inaccurate evaluations affect millennials to have a genuine conversation with their employer about social media and whether it affects them. Employers who have inaccurately evaluated millennials as “self-centered” have given millennials a negative view, so talking about ways to fix these negative effects could turn out badly. Instead employers need to understand that digital technology and social media is growing within the workplace so a mutual understanding between both generations must be established.

### **Mutual Understanding between Baby Boomers and Millennials**

Millennials and employers can come to a mutual understanding in the workplace by realizing that they both come from two different time periods in the workplace. Majority of employers are baby boomers and majority of employees are millennials. Baby boomers have

better soft skills while millennials have better hard skills. Both generations could help each other out instead of looking down upon one another. Employers could start transitioning their workplace to be more social media friendly while having small workshops that teach millennials the importance of soft skills. This transition and workshops allow millennials to continue using their social media to spread the word of the company they work at. They also learn the soft skills that make it easier to communicate with one another, build relationships, and build trust between co-workers and bosses. Employers benefit from millennials' hard skills because they learn all the digitally based knowledge that millennials have. Employers could gain hard skills, but also start to understand why millennials use social media to communicate. It shouldn't matter whether someone communicates through social media or face to face, because some form of communication is being done.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, millennials want to feel a sense of connection when they are at work. According to Bob Kulhan, "The next generation of leaders increasingly focuses on finding a workplace wherein they feel recognized, valued, and appreciated for their talents and contributions, which in turn installs a feeling of belonging and importance" (Kulhan). If employers stop inaccurately evaluating and giving millennials a bad reputation of being "self-centered," then millennials will gain power. Keltner states that groups give power to others; the group who is not giving millennials the power to influence the greater good is employers. Keltner's theory is about finding the best ways to communicate to endure power. In order for millennials to endure power and find the best way to communicate in the workplace, employers should start workshops that help millennials' interpersonal communication. These workshops could include one on one conversation between employers and millennials who lack more soft skills than other millennials. Doing the workshops this way insures that millennials who struggle



with their soft skills are able to advance. After everyone is at the same level, it is a faster process to help all millennials in the workplace. This workshop will be the most efficient and fastest way to get millennials to develop those soft skills needed in the workplace but still remain intact with their hard skills.

### **Conclusion**

The divide between baby boomers and millennials is clear, but that does not diminish the possibility of a mutual understanding between both generations. Social media has negatively affected millennials' interpersonal communication in the workplace, while also affecting them positively. Even though social media has negatively affected millennials that does not mean that employers can inaccurately evaluate them after observing these effects. Employers should realize that social media helps millennials' communicate in other forms. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, face-to-face communication is not as important as it was in past generations. Although it is helpful to have the soft skills to communicate, not all employees have that skill today. Times are changing in the workplace; employers and millennials have to change with it. This is the only way that millennials and employers will be satisfied in the workplace. Employers get their soft skilled/hard skilled employees they want working for their companies. Meanwhile millennials will be able to use social media to its full capacity without a worry of what employers think of them. "Providing modern technology such as interactive signage or glass boards shows millennial employees not only that you "get it", but more importantly, that you're invested in their success. This can go a long way in fostering loyalty from current employees as well as attracting new employees" (Cason).

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